

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 and 26-31 are pending in the application, with claims 1-22 and 26-30 being withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a restriction/election of species requirement and claim 31 being allowed.¹ Claim 31 is the same as canceled claim 25 – previously indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter – rewritten in independent format. “Newly presented” claims 32 and 33 correspond to previously canceled claims 23 and 24, respectively, with claim 32 representing a slightly amended version of claim 23 (the amendment being made for clarity) and claim 33 being identical to claim 24 (but depending from claim 32). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending, non-withdrawn claims in view of the above, clarifying amendments and the following remarks.

In the December 2, 2003 Office Action, the Examiner maintained the prior rejection of claims 23 and 24 as allegedly being anticipated by Estabrook et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,911,706. In support of that rejection, the Examiner copied Figures 2A and 2B from the ‘706 patent into the Office Action and identified certain parts of the ‘706 patent device which, according to the Examiner, constitute the claim-recited components of the present invention. In particular, the Examiner (apparently) construed the “needle alignment means” 50 in the ‘706 patent as the claim-recited collet and the “needle guidance means” 48 in the ‘706 patent as the claim-recited lock member. (See, for example, column 9, lines 60-63 of the ‘706 patent.) The Examiner’s interpretation of what the ‘706 patent discloses 1) does not comport with what one having skill in the art would understand a collet to be or how a collet operates; and 2) ignores the claim limitation that the lock member is responsive to application of a cam means to close the collet. (In other words, the lock member acts on the collet to effect closure of the collet.) Accordingly, Applicants have effectively reinstated claim 23 (in the form of new claim 32) and renew their traversal of the rejection.

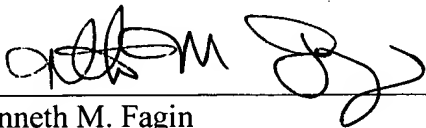
¹ The September 9, 2004 Quayle Action incorrectly indicates that claims 1-31 are pending in the Application.

Nevertheless, new claim 32 differs from claim 23 to the extent claim 32 clarifies what is meant by a collet and how the collet co-operates with the lock member to effect locking of the catheter to the housing. In particular, claim 32 specifies that the collet comprises a split sleeve having fingers which, when engaged by a surface of the lock member, compress radially inwardly against the catheter. This clarifying language is supported, for instance, by Figure 7 (which illustrates the collets 86 as split sleeves with fingers) and page 21, lines 4-9 of the specification ("movement of the lock member 90 causes inwardly-protruding cam portions 136 (Fig. 16) of the lock member 90 [(i.e., the claim-recited surface of the lock member)] to engage and compress [the fingers of the] collets 86 against the catheters 38a, 38b, in turn compressing the catheters upon the outlet tubes 84" to lock the catheters to the housing.

Applicants respectfully submit that, in view of this clarifying language which has been added to previous claim 23, the Examiner will agree that the '706 patent does not disclose a collet and lock member which are configured as and which co-operate as recited in "new" claim 32. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 32 and 33 (which depends from claim 32) are allowable over the art of record, and timely Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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